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SOURCE Shen Pao.

EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF SU-CHOU UNDER THE COMMUNISTS

A recent arrival from Su-chou reports rather discouraging conditions there under Communist rule.

The first actions of the Communist army on entering Su-chou [Su-chou was evacuated by Nationalists on 27 April 1949] were to proclaim it a municipality and appoint Hui Yu-yu (Ueda: 3366, 6179, 2307) mayor and Wu Ming (1275, 4485) deputy mayor. A military control commission was also set up. A meeting of business men was called and a demand made for troop "comfort" supplies amounting to 3,000 cigarettes, 3,000 dozen socks, 10,000 piculs [one picul equals 133.3 pounds] of rice and 5,000 silver yuan. A levy of four tenths of a year's crop was laid on landowners.

The occupation forces admitted that they had no advance plans for taking over the civil government. The new administrators, men and women, are all young, apparently around 20 years old, and of high school education. They are entirely inexperienced in governmental affairs. Currency regulations are complicated and business is all tied up. Experienced observers believe 3 months will be needed to put things in order at the present rate of operations. The manager of the People's Bank called a meeting of financial leaders and frightened them by appearing in military uniform.

There seems to be no over-all program for trade. The rate of conversion between Peoples' Bank notes and silver yuan was set at 400 to one, but on the black market the rate is already 740 to one. Consequently, prices are rising on all commodities. Business and industry are at a standstill. Some shops are open, but the owners believe if no change comes soon they will all have to close.

The military control commission is inspecting capital and assets of all business with the purpose of confiscating all they find that belongs to former officials.

So far the new authorities have taken no interest in the private livelihood of the people, saying that their staff is overworked in other matters. They are planning to bring in village and town administrators from north Kiangu. Then the peoples' personal liberties will be at an end.

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